Shortage of soldiers

†311. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is an acute shortage of soldiers and army men in the army;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the urgent steps being taken by Government to enhance recruitment in the army for the safety of the country; and

(d) the outcome of the measures taken by Government?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (d) There is no shortage of soldiers in the Army. However, there is a shortage of 11,371 officers in the Army which is mainly in the ranks of Lieutenant Colonel & below.

Several measures have been taken by the Government to enhance recruitment in the Army. All Officers including those in Short Service Commission (SSC) have been made eligible to hold substantive rank of Captain, Major and Lieutenant Colonel and equivalents after 2, 6 and 13 years of reckonable service respectively. The term of SSC Officers has been extended to 14 years. This has made the Army an attractive career option. Besides Army has undertaken sustained image projection publicity campaign to create awareness among the youth. Awareness campaigns, participation in career fairs and exhibitions, advertisements in print and electronic media are also some of the other measures in this direction.

Compulsory NCC training

312. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal to impact NCC training to every student compulsorily at Higher Secondary level in the country to instill a sense of patriotism;

(b) if so, the details of the scheme and proposal;

(c) if not, the reason therefore; and

(d) the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

AV Committee recommendation on SSO and regular officers

313. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) have the recommendations of the "Ajay Vikram Singh Committee" laying down that 1,100 Short Service Officers and 500 regular officers be taken every year, rather than following the prevailing practice of commissioning 1,000 regular and 500 Short Service Officers;

(b) if so, from which year AV Committee's this recommendation is being followed; and

(c) if not, what are the reasons for not implementing this recommendation?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (c) In May 2001, Army HQrs had forwarded a paper to the Ministry of Defence drawing attention to certain shortcomings and imbalances in the organizational structure of the officers cadre with the aim of achieving optimal combat effectiveness by bringing down the age profile of Battalions/Brigade Commanders and to make the organization more effective in fulfilling individual career aspirations of the officers.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Ministry of Defence had set up a committee to examine proposals of Army HQrs on 16th July, 2001, under the Chairmanship of Shri Ajay Vikram Singh, the then Special Secretary with representatives of all the three Services. The Committee submitted its report in January, 2003. The Raksha Mantri gave 'in principle' approval to the recommendations of the Committee in September 2003. The Committee identified two interrelated issues viz., high age profile and career stagnation. The Committee made a total of 15 recommendations encompassing both short term and long term measures.

AVSC has recommended a multi-pronged approach comprising the pull and peel factors, which include a strategy to bring down the age profile through a lasting solution and also short-term measures to provide some immediate relief.

Certain recommendations pertaining to non-select ranks have already been implemented with effect from December 2004. Review of the creation of posts and restructuring of the cadres in the forces is an ongoing and continuous process.

Pending Grievances of Gallantry Awardee Families

314. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of complaints/representations of grievances from the families of Gallantry Award winners in this country are at present pending in his Ministry;

(b) the nature of grievances and the action taken/proposed to be taken thereon; and

(c) by when all these representations are likely to be disposed of ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI M.M. PALLAM RAJU): (a) Two representations from families of Gallantry award winners are presently under consideration.

(b) and (c) One case relates to non-payment of annuity and the other relates to non-receipt of financial assistance. These are being pursued with the concerned Pension Disbursing Authority and the Rajya Sainik Board respectively and are likely to be finalised shortly.

Solving Problems of Ex-servicemen of Punjab

315. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have received representations from several ex-servicemen from the State of Punjab about their problems of housing, pension, employment to their family member etc.;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what steps Government has taken or proposes to take to solve the problems of ex-servicemen of Punjab?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI M.M. PALLAM RAJU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The representations received from ex-servicemen (ESM) of the State of Punjab relate to pension employment and general representations. Out of 5 pension cases 1 has been finalized and the remaining 4 have been taken up with the concerned authorities. Employment to Next of Kins (NOKs) of martyrs is being provided in accordance with the policy of the Punjab Government and till date 441 NOKs have been appointed under 'Honours and Gratuity' scheme.

(c) Government is consistently endeavouring to solve the problems of ex-servicemen in cooperation with the various State Governments and Union Territory Administrations.